(b) il so, whether any Committee has been appointed to look into the matter;

(c) what are the criteria followed for the upgradation Of cities in the country; and

(d) what decision has been taken for the upgradation of some cities in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. (See *below).*

(d) Does not arise.

Statement

Cities/towns are classified/reclassi-fied for payment of House Rent and Compensatory (City) Allowances to the Central Governmlent employees on the basis of their population as reflec ted in the decennial census figures. The Criteria followed in this ece'ga!rd are as follows:—

Class	Population
A'	More than 16 lakhs.
B-1	Above 8 lakhs but not exceeding 16 lakhs.
B-2	Above 4 lakhs but not exceeding 8 lakhs.
*C	Above 50,000 but not exceeding 4 lakhs.

*No Compensatory (City) Allowance is admissible in 'C Class cities.

In classification of cities on the basis'of their decennial census population, the population of municipal area of the city is taken into account for HRA purpose, and the population of Urban Agglomeration of the city, wherever such UA exists, otherwise municipal area of the city, is taken into account for CCA purpose. HRA as admissible in a city on the basis of its classification with reference to its population in the municipal area, has also been made admissible in its Urban Agglomeration w.e.f. 26-10-1977 as a result of decision of the Government on the demand of the Staff Side.

Introduction of container service in Indian Shipping

@*135. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken so far or are being contemplated in future to introduce Container Service for efficient shipping in India;

(b) what a!re the details of expenditure incurred so far and proposed to be incurred together with the facilities being created and ratio of container traffic to the total; and

(c) what is the number of agencies in the country involved in container operations on land, sea and ah* and what are the steps being taken to achieve co-drdiation between them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) to (c) For a multimodal system of transporting cargo on land and sea *on a* through transport document, which containerisation implies, facilities have been developed in India at several ports for handling container ships and containers, as well as at inland locations for direct 'receipt and despatch of containers. Arrangements have also been made for Customs clearance facilities of import and export cargo in containers handled at inland locations.

(SPreviously Starred Question 55, transferred from the 26th February, 1988

A sum of Rs. 41.09 crores was spent for developing container handling facilities at Madras, Cochin, Calcutta and Haldua ports during the Sixth Five yea$_r$ Plan. At Bombay port, a su$_m$ of Rs. 27.27 crores was spent upto the end of VI Plan. Provision of Rs. 59.92 crores has been made for development of container handling facilities at existing major container handling ports during the VII Plan. A sum of Rs. 2.26 crores has also been spent on the establishment of Inland Container Depots (ICDs) at Bangalore, New Delhi, Gantur, Gauhati, Anaparty and Coimbatore. An amount of Rs. 5.14, crores is proposed to be spent for further development of ICDs at Bangalore (Whitefield) and Delhi (Tughlakabad).

Container carrying vessels are calling at major ports in India, providing sailings from and to a large number of countries. Shipping Corporation of India has also established container services for Europe, USA-Atlantic ports, East Coast of Canada and Australia. SCI proposes development of container services for Black Sea ports in USSR and to Far East.

At present, 20 per cent of the total general cargo handled at ports in India is containerised.

A large number of agencies are involved in container operations. The main agencies involved in container operations are ports, shipping lines, Railways and Customs, coordination between these ageneies being done by Ministry of Commerce.

Disposal of income tax anti central excise cases

*136. PROF. C. 'LAKSHMANNA: Will the Ministe'r of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) what is the number of appeal cases relating to income-tax and central excise which are pending more than a year and what are the reasons the'refor; and

(b) what measures are being taken by Government fo$_r$ the expeditious disposal of the pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) It is presumed that the Hon'ble Member has in mind the appeal cases pending in the Courts for mote than one year.

The number of such appeals relating to income-tax and central excise are given below:

Income-Tax—Supreme Court- 2248 cases
High Courts- 22472 cases Central
Excise:— Supreme Court- 2000 casis
H:gh Courts- 5600 cas: s

The main reasons for the pendency of these cases are legal and procedural delays.

(b) The income-tax and central excise officials have been instructed to pursue the cases vigorously in the courts.

Interim relief for working journalists

*137. SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT:
SHRI CHITTA BASU:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision regarding the grant of intetom relief to working journalists and non-journalists;

(b) if so,' what are the details thereof; and

(c) if no decision has been taken so far, what are the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) to (c) The recommendations of the Wage Boards for Working Journalists and Non-Journalists Staff constituted by the Government Of India in July, 1985 under the Working Journalists and Other Newspaper Employees (Condi* tions of Service) and Miscellaneous